

# PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

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THERE WERE 121,523 cases of notifiable infectious diseases reported through November, compared with 116,401 cases in 1959. Among the most frequently occurring infectious diseases, there was a significant increase in streptococcal infections, which topped the 1960 list with 28,800 reported cases, through November, compared with 22,361 for all of 1959. Cases of venereal diseases, mumps and viral hepatitis also increased in number. There was a substantial decrease in cases of measles and pertussis.

The current trend as regards venereal disease is unfavorable. There have been substantial increases in reported cases of both infectious syphilis and gonorrhea.

Tuberculosis ranks sixth among notifiable diseases in the number of new cases. It is the cause of half the deaths due to notifiable diseases. Preliminary figures indicate that the number of new cases in 1960 will decline less than at any time in the past ten years. Similarly, the deaths from this disease are expected to show a very small decline. The decline may be due to stabilized disease rates in older persons and, in some areas of the state, to improved reporting.

More than 12,750 radiation installations have been registered with the department. Current estimates are that this represents at least 75 per cent of all radiation source possessors in the state.

About 45 per cent of the registrants thus far are dentists, and almost 50 per cent are physicians, representatives of hospitals and x-ray laboratories, veterinarians, chiropractors and podiatrists. Most of the remaining registrations are for industrial, governmental, or educational facilities.

X-ray machines are the most frequently reported radiation source. These include dental x-ray units, medical radiographic, fluoroscopic, and therapeutic equipment; industrial x-ray apparatus, with such diversified uses as the measurement of the level of beer in cans, the detection of flaws in metal casings,

x-ray units for the inspection of prison visitors, and x-ray diffraction units for research and analysis of materials.

Aside from the knowledge gained through registration of who has radiation sources and why, important data concerning the safety practices of source possessors are becoming available. Registrants are reporting information concerning radiation safety surveys, or the lack of them, and the use of shielding, beam limitation devices, and filters to reduce or eliminate unnecessary exposure.

It is expected this information will be helpful in pointing out areas in which practices and equipment may be improved, where educational emphasis may be placed, and where controls or inspection are necessary.

The cooperation of registrants and of others associated with the program has been deeply appreciated. The information collected with their assistance should help make radiation a less hazardous, more useful tool to everyone.

Three new projects in local health departments were approved recently by the department, including one for the development and evaluation of a family treatment program for the control of delinquency in Imperial County.

The Los Angeles City Health Department proposes to carry out a new program for the early detection of cervical cancer among patients receiving prenatal care in health department clinics. This program will be carried out in cooperation with the cytology laboratory of the Los Angeles County Hospital, and includes training of staff members in the necessary techniques.

That department also proposes to conduct a training program for selected public health administrators to improve their skills of handling the human problems of organizational administration and supervision.